

claws. The Gallic cock in his ruffling pride,  
 gallant and  
*galant*, divided between love and glory,  
 cannot equal the  
 sweetness of their magic notes. Yet this voice  
 that has  
 always greeted so faithfully the triumph of  
 light over  
 darkness, true national emblem of the  
 country of le Roi  
 Soleil and la Ville Lumiere, can on its own  
 ground chal-  
 lenge the world. France and England, the Art  
 of Prose  
 and the Art of Poetry, need not meet in  
 rivalry; but when  
 it comes to the Art of Life, though there are  
 times, not  
 seldom, when there is no comfort like  
 English poetry,  
 I feel, for myself, a more permanent  
 sympathy with the  
 good sense and the grace of France. Life  
 itself, indeed,  
 contains more prose than poetry. It is seldom  
 lyric or  
 high tragedy. It is often a flatter, sadder,  
 sorrier tiling,  
 But in that wilderness the genius of France  
 has raised a  
 more smiling oasis of civilisation than any  
 other since the  
 garden of the Greek Muses ran desolate to  
 seed. Ronsard  
 and Rabelais, Montaigne and La Fontaine,  
 Molière and  
 Marivaux, Fontenelle and Montesquieu,  
 Diderot and  
 Voltaire, Musset and Mérimée, Daudet and  
 Anatole  
 France—it is to you one returns. You never  
 posed as  
 saints or prophets—you knew too well that  
 one does not  
 travel far on a pedestal; from which the view  
 is exalted,  
 doubtless, but monotonous. You did not wave  
 the banner  
 of the ideal, embroidered with the New

Jerusalem on one  
 side and your own portraits on the other. You were not,  
 pompously oracular, for you saw too clearly  
 that a tripod •  
 is the place rather for a bubbling pot than for  
 a wise man\*  
 You believed in so few things that one can  
 believe in you  
 and in them, when others grow to seem  
 fatuous and  
 stale—in good sense and good humour, w f  
*amour* and  
*f esprit\**